

Transfer of Taylor-Whittle House City Council Presentation June 28, 2016



Structure

- Primary dwelling structure built in 1791
- Two-story brick, federal style building
- National Register of Historic Places
- In the heart of the Freemason community, adjacent to Freemason Abbey
- Property is zoned as West Freemason Historic and Cultural Conservation District (HC-WF1)

Background

- Transferred by Will to Norfolk Historic Foundation (NHF) in 1974 by Edmonia Lee Whittle
- Transferred to the city by NHF in 1975
- The Will provides the property is to be maintained and made reasonably available to the people of Norfolk
- If the owner expresses an unwillingness to maintain the property as a historic landmark, the property reverts to the heirs

Maintenance History

- In need of maintenance when transferred to the City
- Approximately \$500,000 has been spent for preservation work such as:
 - Scraping
 - Painting
 - Chimney removal
 - Exterior wood replacement
 - Significant roof repairs
- City provides basic landscaping and trash pick up

Considerations

- Continue current preservation maintenance
 - ✓ Associated continued costs
- Restore Building
 - ✓ Recent estimates for restoration = \$2.0 million
- Issue RFP for highest and best use
 - ✓ Market driven
 - ✓ City may have to provide additional funds depending on responses
- Transfer property to a willing foundation for restoration and use

Proposed Transfer

- Property to be conveyed “as is” to Virginia Historic Restoration Foundation (VHRF)
- \$0 purchase price in lieu of new owner raising funds to restore property to completion
- Transfer of ownership is subject to the provisions of the Will
- New owner shall bear the risk of loss on the property and all improvements thereon
- If new owner is not able to raise the funds necessary to maintain the property as a historic landmark within three years, the property will revert back to the city
- Should the property revert to the city, it is recommended the building be transferred to the heirs of Edmonia Lee Whittle

Next Steps

- City Council considers conveyance of the Taylor-Whittle House to the Virginia Historic Restoration Foundation on tonight's docket
- Approval recommended